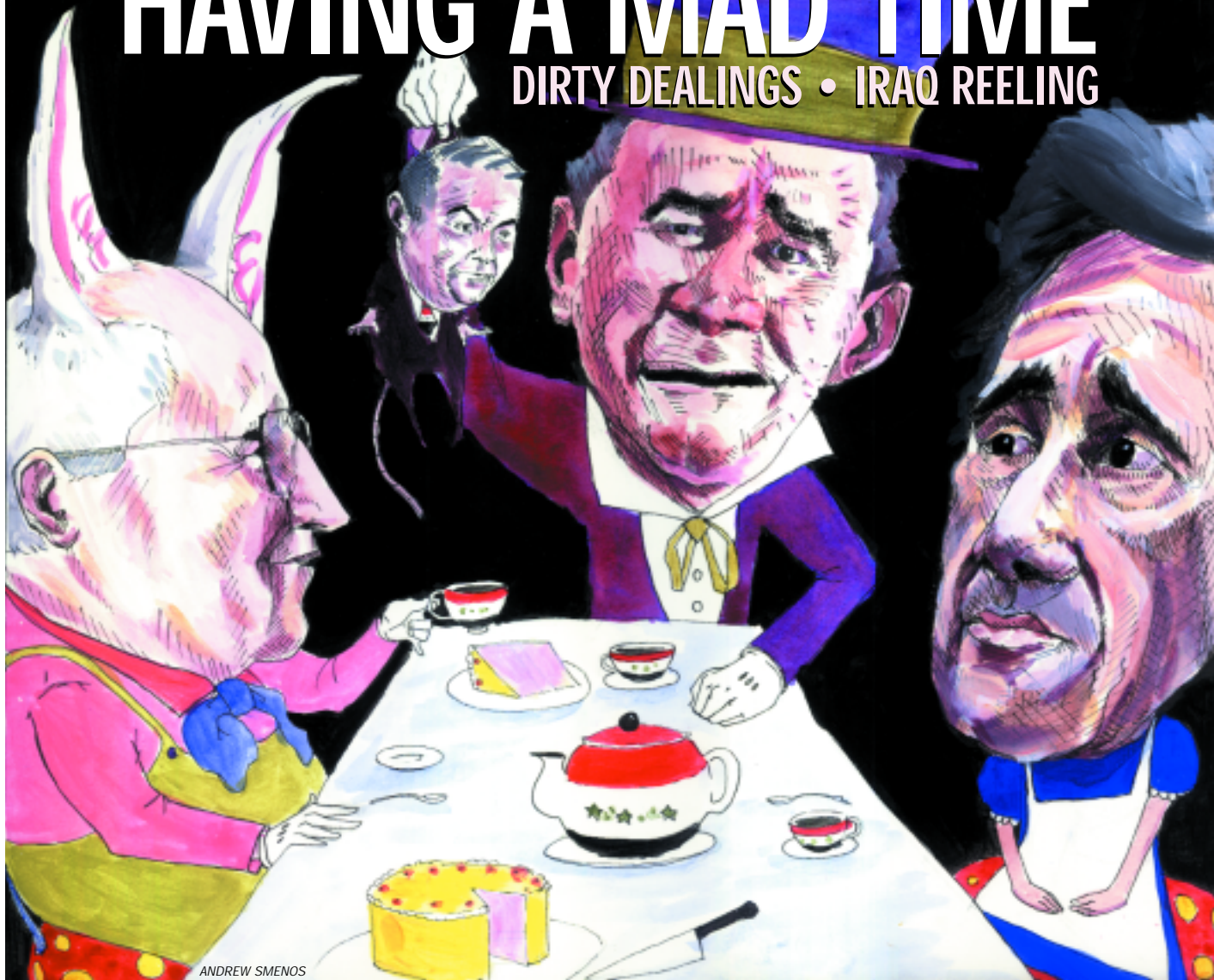


THE INDYPENDENT

Issue #57, September 22 – October 5, 2004 • a free paper for free people

HAVING A MAD TIME

DIRTY DEALINGS • IRAQ REELING



COVER BLOWN:
**COLOMBIA'S
DEALER-IN-CHIEF**

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**PROTESTS
GO MOBILE**

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Liberals Get Kerryied Away

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With autonomous chapters in more than 100 cities throughout the world, the Independent Media Center is an international network of volunteer media activists.

The IMC seeks to create a new media ethic by providing progressive, in-depth and accurate coverage of issues. We are a community-based organization using media to facilitate political and cultural self-representation. We seek to illuminate and analyze issues affecting individuals, communities and ecosystems by providing media tools and space to those seeking to communicate. We espouse open dialogue and placing the means of communication and creativity back in the hands of the people, away from the drive of profit.

The Independent is funded by benefits, subscriptions, donations, grants and ads from organizations and individuals with similar missions.

WHAT CAN I DO TO GET INVOLVED?

The IMC has an open door. You can write for *The Independent*, film events and rallies, self-publish articles to the web, take photos or just help us run the office. As an organization relying entirely on volunteer support, we encourage all forms of participation.

The print team reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity. We welcome your participation in the entire editorial process.

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SEPTEMBER-
OCTOBER



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

THE INDEPENDENT
has open meetings every
Tuesday, 7pm
at 34 E. 29 St., 2nd floor.

FRI SEPT 24

10AM - 9PM • Free
WORLD UNITY FESTIVAL
The intention is to raise spiritual consciousness, promote environmental awareness, cultivate peace and social justice, encourage youth empowerment and create positive cultural exchanges. Music, visual arts workshops, Indigenous and religious leaders, educators and activists (through 9/26):
Inwood Hill Park
W. 218th St. and Indian Rd.
www.worldunityfestival.com

7PM • Free

CRITICAL MASS
This is an international event held in hundreds of cities on the last Friday of every month when bicyclists spontaneously come together to ride the ordinarily car-clogged streets of their cities;
Union Square North
www.times-up.org

7 - 11PM • Free

AL-AWDA FESTIVAL OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE
Commemorating the 4th Anniversary of the Intifada and the 22nd Anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila Massacres, Al-Awda presents a tribute to Palestinian Cultural Resistance. Art, film, poetry, music, dance and more;

Alwan for the Arts
16 Beaver Street, 4th Floor
lamisjd@riseup.net
www.al-awdan.org

8:30PM • \$10

MUSIC FOR AMERICA PRESENTS: PETE ROBBINS & CENTRIC & URI CANE GROUP
Music for America is a non-profit political organization connecting culture and politics, exposing political hypocrisies and igniting a grassroots movement through live concerts and an interactive website;
Cornelia Street Cafe
29 Cornelia Street
www.musicforamerica.org

SAT SEPT 25

12:30 - 2:30PM • Free
TAXES FOR PEACE
Explore the connections between you and the world you fund through your taxes. Currently 50 percent of federal income taxes are used for military purposes. Find out about a movement to legalize spending your taxes for non-military purposes only;
Riverside Church
490 Riverside Drive
www.peacetaxfund.org

7:30 - 10PM • \$10
SHADAGGA OF MAHOGANY BLUES MAGAZINE & THE UNIVERSAL HIP HOP PARADE presents: **BLESS DA MIC** Spoken Word, Hip Hop, Reggae, Soca & Open Mic (sign up @ 7:30 PM). Featuring: Violinist, Vocalist and Spoken Word artist Sweet Potato, NJ's Conscious Rappers Hasan Salaam and Hi Coup, Southern Spoken Word

Artist Najih, Prolific Spoken Word Artist from Bklyn RL tha Gifted1, Spekz from NY Demolition:
Restoration Plaza, SKYLIGHT GALLERY (3rd Fl.)
1368 Fulton Street, Brooklyn
shadagga@hotmail.com
718.585.7123
www.mahoganyblues.com
www.nychiphopparade.com

SUN SEPT 26

11AM - 7PM • Free
DUKE ELLINGTON BLVD MUSIC FESTIVAL
Two stages with luminaries such as Felicia Collins from the Letterman Show, Charli Persip and the New York Classics and Motown revivalist Carlton J Smith. There will be food and merchandise vendors, voter registration, raffles and face painting;
W. 106th Street from Central Park West to Columbus Ave.
www.columbus-amsterdam-BID.org

3PM • \$9

CARLOS CASTANEDA: ENIGMA OF A SORCERER
Former members of Castaneda's Sorcerers Group offers rare insight into his ideology, along with experts in Shamanism, dreaming and mythology. Abstract imagery and intermixed visualizations invite the viewer to experience Castaneda's non-ordinary reality firsthand;
The Two Boots Pioneer Theater
155 E. 3rd St. @ Ave. A
www.twoboots.com
212.254.3300

WED SEPT 29

6 - 10PM • Free
PRISON FAMILIES COMMUNITY FORUM MEETING
The friends and family members of the 70,000 incarcerated individuals in NY State will hold their first organizing meeting of 2004. We educate the public about the atrocities of the prison industrial complex and we need your help;
141 Fifth Avenue, Brooklyn
718.857.2990: 914.643.4528
7PM • \$5 suggested donation
BENEFIT: BOOKS THROUGH BARS with **EDGARDO VEGA YUNQUE** and **ANYSSA KIM**
Novelist Yunque explores themes of identity and place, and the past lives of NYC's East Village and LES while poet Kim reads from her first book. The donation of a paperback dictionary would be greatly valued and would serve as your cover for the event;
Bluestockings
172 Allen St. btw Stanton and Rivington
www.bluestockings.com

TUES SEPT 28

6PM • Free
WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE 2005 PEACE CALENDAR RELEASE PARTY
Featuring Grace Paley, David McReynolds and others;
Tamiment Library at NYU
Bobst Library
70 Washington Sq.
www.warresisters.org
212.228.0450

SAT OCT 2

1 - 4PM • Free
INTERCOLLEGIATE POETRY SLAM LEAGUE
BMCC vs. Brooklyn vs. Hunter vs. Queensboro;
Bowery Poetry Club
308 Bowery @ Blecker
www.bowerypoetry.com

5 - 7PM • Free

WIRELESS ART
See wireless artists in action as they create works using cell phones, laptops, wireless Internet connections, PDAs and radio. Museum staff will help you join in with your WiFi-enabled laptop, PDA or cell phone;
Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn
www.brooklynmuseum.org
www.spectropolis.info

MON OCT 4

8PM - 2AM • \$5
FREEDOM RIDES BOOTY SHAKE PARTY: A BENEFIT FOR D.R.U.M.
D.R.U.M. works against the wave of immigrant detentions and deportations since 9/11. The party follows the Freedom Ride culminating event at the Unisphere at Flushing Meadows Park, Queens. Rally in Queens, Party in Brooklyn!! DJ Rensch spinning hip-hop, funk, soul, etc;
Blah Blah Lounge
501 11th Street at 7th Ave., Bklyn
www.drumnation.org/drum.html
www.blwfr.org

WED OCT 6

7PM • Free
BOOK RELEASE PARTY THE CANNABIS COMPANION
Meet the author, Steve Wishnia, and check out his new book;
Bluestockings
172 Allen St. btw Stanton and Rivington
www.bluestockings.com

THU OCT 7

7PM • Donation
"HOMAGE TO EL SALVADOR" ART OPENING
In 1932, peasants in western El Salvador launched a series of strikes in favor of land, work, and food. The military responded by killing at least 10,000 people. This exhibit is first of a series of events in conjunction with the New York International Symposium: EL SALVADOR 1932!;
Brecht Forum
122 West 27th Street
www.brechtforum.org

FRI OCT 17

8:30PM • \$12
JOHN BROWN THEATRE presents: MR. FLUSHING GOES TO WASHINGTON: A PRESIDENTIAL VAUDEVILLE
3 actors, 8 characters, 1 election, several scams & the fate of the free world... all in about an hour;
CRS Studio Theatre
123 4th Ave., 2nd Floor (btw 12 and 13 Sts.)
Reservations: 212.502.3662
www.mrflushing.com

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BELOW 14TH ST.

Bluestockings Books & Cafe
172 Allen St.

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49 E. Houston St.

Key Foods

Ave. A & E. 4th St.

May Day Books at

Theater for the New City

155 First Ave. |

(btw 9th & 10th)

Kim's Video

3rd Ave. & St. Marks Pl.

Housing Works

126 Crosby St.

LGBT Center

213 W. 13th St.

14TH TO 26TH ST.

Revolution Books

9 W. 19th St.

Second Wave Laundrocenter

55th St. & 9th Ave.

Ziggies

94th St. & 2nd Ave.

ABOVE 26TH ST.

Labyrinth Books

536 W. 112th St.

96th St. Library

112 E. 96th St.

Kim's Books

113th St. & Broadway

Uptown Juice Bar

54 W. 125th St.

Coogan's Bar

169th St. & Broadway

Fort Washington Bakery & Deli

808 W. 181 St.

Jumpin' Jalapenos

W. 207th St. (btw B'way & Vermillion)

Cafe Seven

7 Henshay St.

BROOKLYN

Flatbush Library

22 Linden Blvd.

Cortelyou Library

1305 Cortelyou Rd.

Tillie's of Brooklyn

248 Dekalb Ave.

Marquet Patisserie

680 Fulton St.

Halcyon

227 Smith St.

Freddy's Bar and Backroom

Dean St. & 6th Ave.

BAM

30 Lafayette Ave.

Tea Lounge

Union St. @ 7th Ave.

Atlantis Super Laundry Center

472 Atlantic Ave.

Photoplay Video

933 Manhattan Ave.

Clovis Books

4th St. & N. Bedford Ave.

Make the Road by Walking

301 Grove St.

QUEENS

Sunnyside Library

43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

East Elmhurst Library

95-06 Astoria Blvd.

Jackson Heights Library

35-51 81st St.

Friend's Tavern

78-11 Roosevelt Ave.

Cafe Aubergine

49-22 Skillman Ave.

Sunnyside Library

43-06 Greenpoint Ave.

BRONX

Bronx Museum

165th St. & Grand Concourse

The Point

940 Garfield Ave.

JERSEY CITY

Five Corners Public Library

678 Newark Ave.

Downtown Public Library

472 Jersey Ave.

Ground Coffee Shop

530 Jersey Ave.

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Muddy Waters

CRIME & CONTRACTS AT THE ILA

BY BENNETT BAUMER

Genovese crime family soldier George Barone allegedly whacked so many people he couldn't keep track. "I didn't keep a scorecard, but it was probably ten or twelve," Barone testified in Gambino boss Peter Gotti's trial last year.

Barone got his start in the 1940s as a longshoreman ship cleaner by day in Manhattan. By night, he was a mob hit man "protecting" Genovese interests in the International Longshoremen Association (ILA).

These days, the now sickly, aging enforcer is better known as CW-1 (a cooperating witness), and Barone's cooperation with federal authorities is leading to the arrests of top ILA officials.

Harold Daggett, an ILA General Organizer rumored to be next in line to lead the union, was arrested in July for extorting money on the waterfront.

An International Longshoremen mid-level vice president, Louis Saccenti was charged with perjury this past summer as well.

In testimony before the New York/New Jersey Waterfront Commission in October 2003, International President John Bowers spoke about the meeting to decide how Daggett was to become his successor. The meeting took place in a restaurant with recently indicted Miami longshoremen official Arthur Coffey and CW-1, who muscled Bowers into choosing Daggett as the next ILA President.

"I know [Barone's] reputation, I am not going to ask a lot of questions. I am figuring now how the hell to get out of the place," said Bowers, according to federal court documents.

The feds aren't the only ones responsible for the ILA leadership's legal troubles. Rank-and-file longshoremen are waiting on word from a Manhattan federal judge on whether their master contract will be struck down. *The Independent* reported voting irregularities and possible fraud during the union's June contract ratification.

"We filed a lawsuit and an injunction to stop them from ratifying the contract. This effort is about the contract, but also to empower working people in the union," said Leonard Riley of Local 1422 in South Carolina.

Riley and others contend that international officials, some with close ties to organized crime, take care of their home ports at the expense of others.

"We feel strongly that some who are international and local officers haven't represented the whole coast. They use their clout to get better deals in their local agreement," commented Riley. Locals ratify a master contract and then must bargain their own local contracts with the stevedore companies.

Riley gave as an example the International's pension fund. In Port Charleston, South Carolina, the pension is based on man-hours on the pier, which Riley said brought in more than \$20 million. In contrast, in New York, shipping companies pay into the fund based also on tonnage moved. Riley calculated that Charleston would gross more than \$200 million if its pension was based on tonnage.

Longshoremen dissidents held a meeting in Virginia last month to



discuss and strategize for creating a democratic union. Veteran Baltimore Local 333 member John Blom has been active passing out fliers, talking to co-workers, and traveling to other ports to speak out against concessions in the master contract.

"The primary issue in Baltimore with young workers is lack of a wage bridge," Blom said. The master contract, if a judge rules it is valid, provides no way for new hires in the ports who work enough hours to gain significant pay increases. "Because younger people are employed at a lower rate, it's cheaper to give them the work and that means there is less for [veteran workers]."

The Port of Baltimore voted down the master contract by a 5-1 majority. Blom also contends that a couple years ago international leaders set up Baltimore Local 2066 as a "ghost local" with few real members to take jurisdiction and power from his local. Local 2066 unanimously voted for the master contract - with only five people voting.

ILA members in the Philadelphia-Delaware region still haven't negotiated a local contract and haven't ruled out a job action. "It looks very critical. We're the largest local in Philadelphia and Delaware, and we're not taking any cuts," said Local 1291 Vice President Royce Adams.

IN BRIEF

SOARES SOARS TO NOVEMBER BALLOT

David Soares stunned fellow Democrats last week when he upset incumbent Albany District Attorney Paul Clyne in the Sept. 14 primary. Centering his campaign on the full repeal of the Rockefeller drug laws, Soares won 62 percent of the vote.

"The people of Albany have spoken loud and clear, and all the DAs in New York state need to hear them," Soares, 38, told the Associated Press. "The Rockefeller drug laws need to be repealed." The state's prosecutors have been among the main opponents of changing the laws, which have some of the harshest penalties in the nation for drug offenses.

Soares will face Republican Roger Cusick in the November election, while Clyne will run on the Independence Party line.

ILLEGAL DRUGS RETURN TO TIMES SQUARE

That's right, kids, marijuana, Ecstasy and crack cocaine are all back in Times Square - under glass. The Drug Enforcement Administration hopes its traveling exhibit, Target America: Drug Traffickers, Terrorists and You, will become "the world's highest profile antidrug museum."

The exhibit includes replicas of an Afghan heroin factory, a motel-room methamphetamine lab, and a tenement crackhouse - and a display supposedly demonstrating "the link between drugs and terror." It shows "artifacts" from the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon.

Target America is brought to New York tourists with public and private dollars, including the generous sponsorship of Hewlett-Packard.

FLICK A BIC TO PICK A BIKE LOCK

Turns out that Kryptonite bicycle locks can take a sledgehammer, but not a flick of the wrist with the right kind of pen. Long the standard defense against bike thieves, "u-locks" can be foiled in seconds by inserting the ink tube of a disposable Bic pen. After a few days of internet buzz, the lock's manufacturer Ingersoll-Rand was forced to admit the embarrassing design flaw and offered an exchange, provided owners produce a registered key number, anti-theft protection registration or proof of purchase. While everyone else is scrambling to find a replacement lock now, most bike messengers switched to double-locking heavy chains years ago after industrious thieves started using freon to crack the lock.

OOH BABY BABY IT'S A WILD WORLD

A London-to-Washington flight was diverted to Maine on Sept. 21 when it was discovered that Yusuf Islam, formerly known as singer Cat Stevens, was aboard the plane. When Islam's name surfaced on a government watch list, the Transportation Security Administration requested the plane land at the nearest airport. In Maine, Islam was questioned by FBI and Immigration officials: and denied entry into the United States. Federal officials said Islam was denied entry on national security grounds, but had no details about why the peace activist might be considered a risk to the U.S. Islam has vocalized his opposition to all political violence. After September 11, Islam issued a statement saying: "No right thinking follower of Islam could possibly condone such an action: The Quran equates the murder of one innocent person with the murder of the whole of humanity." Barred from the U.S., Islam was expected to be returned Sept. 22 to London.

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- Naomi Klein

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OPERATION IMPACT: New York Police patrol the gates of Franklin K. Lane High School. PHOTOS: ALEX STONEHILL

The Dirty Dozen

THREE STRIKES, YOU'RE OUT OF PUBLIC HIGH

BY SARAH STUTEVILLE

It is 7:30 a.m. A cool, bright, September morning ushers in the new school year along Jamaica Avenue near the border of Brooklyn and Queens. High school students in flat-brimmed caps and oversized tees maneuver around rumbling delivery trucks, earning honks from frustrated drivers as they head towards Franklin K. Lane High School. School won't start for over an hour but the day is well underway for the students, who are already lining up to get through security checks before their first classes.

Metal detectors have long been a reality for high school students in New York City, but for those attending schools like Lane, security means much more than the inconvenience of metal detectors. Last winter, the school was named one of the "Dirty Dozen" along with eleven other high schools and junior highs that were labeled the most violent schools in the city. In response to increasing concerns over violent city public schools, Mayor Bloomberg and School Chancellor Joel Klein teamed up with the New York Police Department in January of 2004 to implement "Operation Impact Schools."

The school security program placed about 150 on-duty New York Police Officers, in addition to existing School Safety Officers, inside twelve "Impact Schools." The program also included the establishment of a "zero tolerance policy" toward students who repeatedly violated school discipline codes. These students would become "Spotlight Students" and be subjected to a "Three strikes you're out" policy. If a Spotlight Student committed three violations, they would be removed from the school and placed in "Off Site Detention Centers" then reassigned to special "Second Opportunity Schools."

The philosophy behind Operation Impact Schools grew out of other policing programs implemented in the city last year. Operation Impact began in January of 2003, when police, using COMPSTAT (a database that compiles crime statistics and maps them according to

crime severity and precinct), created a list of the highest crime areas and increased police presence in those neighborhoods.

Mayor Bloomberg declared Operation Impact a success a year later, citing 364,000 summonses and almost 31,000 arrests. In the wake of that, the city launched Operation Impact Schools, which would take these policies to places like Franklin K. Lane High.

"If y'all have I.D. you get on the left, if not get on the right. No parents in the school, repeat, all parents must stay outside the gate, you will not be allowed inside the school!" shouts Officer Robinson at returning students as they saunter toward the iron gate she is guarding. Robinson's steady stream of commands is hardly the only sign that strict security is in effect. Students also receive orders from a cluster of cops inside patrol cars parked outside the entrance, who regularly insist over megaphones that students "move along."

Operation Impact Schools has been widely celebrated as a success. On the first day of school this year, Police Commissioner Ray Kelly declared that crime in Impact Schools in the past year had dropped 10 percent, while felonies dropped 48 percent. Kelly revealed that an additional 30 schools will get the same kind of police attention applied to the original Impact Schools, and that the number of police assigned to targeted schools will increase from 150 to 200.

Deputy Commissioner of the NYPD, Paul Browne, applauds this approach to school safety. "Generally speaking, people are relieved to see more police in the schools and are glad to see something is happening to deal with discipline problems that disrupt their kids' education," said Browne.

Jim Baumann, Director of the Safety Division at the United Federation of Teachers, is also an advocate of Impact. "We like the approach of Operation Impact, though there are always devils in the details. We're hopeful that the city is on the right track."

But despite support from law enforcement, the mayor's office and school administration, some worry focusing attention and

funds on security obscures the underlying problems in city schools.

"By approaching solutions to the problems in public schools through a criminal lens instead of a social and economic lens, young people are being denied their basic rights. The real problems in these schools are poverty and underfunding. Discipline problems are a symptom of that," says Raybblin Vargas of the Prison Moratorium Project and Teach Us Don't Cuff Us.

Problems at many of the Impact Schools extend beyond disciplinary issues. Only 27 percent of students at Lane are expected to

graduate on time, only 11 percent of entering ninth graders can read at an appropriate grade level and 89 percent of students qualify for free lunch. Disheartening statistics like this are representative of all of the Impact Schools, all of which serve predominately Black and Latino populations.

Santiago Taveras, a local instructional superintendent who has worked in New York City schools for almost two decades, feels that the Impact program approaches discipline from the wrong angle. "There are things these kids are going through that we can't even begin to know. If some girl comes to school crying because there was a gang shooting last night, she should be met by counselors, not more police."

Taveras believes that communication is central to discipline and that an alternative approach to discipline in violent schools would be to train alumni as counselors. "That way there could be a relationship between the kids and the people disciplining them. The kids would respect the counselors, and the counselors would know where they're coming from."

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, spending on counseling and other student support services in New York is only a third of that of other urban school districts. Only about 300 counselors serve all of the city's public high schools, said Taveras.

The people most affected by Operation Impact, of course, are the students. "They don't put up with stuff any more, there are no cell phones allowed, no glass bottles, now when you get in trouble they grab you, put you in a room, and deal with you," says Jacqueline, a sophomore at Lane.

A *New York Times* article published the week of Operation Impact's implementation reported six arrests on the first day of the program. At Franklin K. Lane, two students were arrested when they "got out of control" and became "aggressive" with security agents who asked them for I.D.

According to the mayor's office, formerly chaotic hallways have begun to be brought under control. The office cited Franklin K. Lane as an example.

But Jasmine, also a sophomore at Lane, says that despite the increased police presence, things seem the same. "Kids still cut class all the time and don't respect the teachers. I've been put in detention more, like three times last year, always for not having my I.D. in the halls."

Raybblin Vargas, too, remains unconvinced: "Numbers and statistics from a program like Impact only prove that they have put more cops in these kids' lives, not that they've begun to address the real, fundamental problems in New York City schools."



MOVE ALONG: City cops enforce security before class begins.

Preemptive Strikes Hit Home

BY STEVE WISHNIA AND TIM SPARKMAN

Before last month's Republican convention, Mayor Mike Bloomberg and the New York Police Department boasted that they were ready and able to handle 1,000 arrests a day.

Police were extraordinarily efficient at making arrests, corralling scores of people at a time within orange nets and seizing over 1,800 people during the week of the convention, including 1,100 on Aug. 31. They weren't so efficient at processing the prisoners. The city set up a special detention center for arrested protesters (and bystanders) in an old bus depot besludged with automotive oil. They postponed regular criminal cases to clear the courts for arraigning convention detainees, but kept hundreds of people in jail for far longer than the legal 24-hour limit.

Those contrasts have left many wondering whether Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Ray Kelly had a deliberate policy of pre-emptive detention. "There was obviously some kind of collusion or coordination between local effort and the RNC in terms of trying to make sure that this was as muffled a protest as possible," charges City Councilmember Bill Perkins (D-Manhattan), who chaired a Council hearing on the police tactics Sept. 15. "I don't think they were overwhelmed. I believe that they purposefully delayed the detainees."

In the courts, says New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) lawyer Christopher Dunn, "the judges were there, the district attorneys were there, but there weren't any arrestees." There are "more questions than evidence" about whether the delays were intentional, he says, but the Bloomberg Administration "hasn't offered any credible information as to why people were held so long."

"My suspicion is that it was intentional," adds Bruce Bentley of the National Lawyers Guild. "Do we have absolute proof? No."

Calling such allegations "ridiculous," councilmember Peter Vallone, Jr. (D-Queens) said, "It would have actually helped the Republicans if there was violence in the streets." According to Vallone, the delays were "what happens when a thousand people break the law in a four-hour period."

The NYPD's press office refused to comment over the phone, saying they would only take questions submitted in writing, and responded to an e-mail with the message that they "DO NOT ACCEPT E-MAIL REQUESTS. PLEASE PHONE THIS OFFICE."

The mayor's spokesperson, Ed Skyler, dismissed the Sept. 15 Council hearing as "grandstanding."

ARRESTS: THE ORANGE DRAGNET

The NYPD's main tactic was mass arrest, primarily at the Aug. 27 Critical Mass bicycle ride and on Aug. 31, the day of numerous small direct-action protests. They moved with remarkable precision, sending large teams of officers to head people off at gathering spots, or setting traps, like the East 16th Street snare on Aug. 31. There, police nabbed about 300 protesters at once by forcing them onto a blocked-off side street off Union Square and enclosing them with orange netting.

"They forced us onto the sidewalk, [shouting] 'Move, Move, Move,'" says Jeffrey Parrot, one of those arrested. "Then they started attacking, rushing around and pulling people out for arrests."

Kathie Bell, 55, an activist and real estate salesperson from Chelsea, was also arrested on 16th Street. She says police told the crowd "if you're peaceful, we'll let you go" — then they arrested us. "She was eventually charged with parading without a permit and two counts of disorderly conduct."

The NYCLU's Dunn says that such



"COURTESY, PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT": Police give a protestor CPR on the streets of NYC. PHOTO: ANTRIM CASKEY

"indiscriminate" arrest tactics ensured the arrest of innocent people: "Any time you use nets to trap an entire block or a section of sidewalk, you're guaranteed to get people who were not doing anything illegal or not part of the demonstration."

"I wasn't protesting that day," says Wendy Stefanelli, 35, a clothing stylist from Brooklyn who was arrested at East 26th Street and Park Avenue South on Aug. 31. She was on her way to meet her boyfriend when she saw police throwing a man to the ground. When she tried to call a friend who works for the NYCLU, a man in civilian dress — who'd previously suggested that she leave the area — told police, "Arrest those two girls." She too was charged with parading without a permit and two counts of disorderly conduct.

Many people say police couldn't or wouldn't tell prisoners why they were being arrested. "My arresting officer didn't know what I was being arrested for," says Bell. Parrot says that when he asked what he was being charged with, the officer told him, "I don't know, probably disorderly conduct."

Pre-emptive mass arrests are a common tactic to disrupt protests; police used them at the 2000 demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund in Washington and the Republican convention in Philadelphia. But New York police have generally preferred to use massive numbers of officers and obsessive penning.

That has changed, says Brooklyn College sociology professor Alex Vitale, a co-author of the NYCLU's report on the suppression of the Feb. 15, 2003 antiwar demonstration. "This approach of rounding up people who have not committed any criminal act under the pretext that they are blocking the sidewalk was used on a wide scale in both Times Square on Sunday the 29th and throughout the day on Tuesday the 31st in numerous areas including Ground Zero, Union Square and the steps of the New York Public Library," he says. "It is a disturbing and unconstitutional development."

ARRAIGNMENTS: WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED?

Of the more than 1,800 people arrested, 1,480 were charged with violations, primarily parading without a permit and disorderly conduct, says Bruce Bentley. The rest were charged with misdemeanors, mostly obstructing governmental administration — a charge that basically translates as "disobeying a police officer" — and resisting arrest. Fifty-six were accused of felonies. All but a handful of those, according to Bentley, have been reduced to misdemeanors. The main exceptions are Jamal Holliday, a Harlem youth charged with assaulting a plainclothes detective who rode his

motorcycle into a crowd of protesters on Aug. 30, and Yusuke "Josh" Banno, an Arizona anarchist accused of setting fire to a papier-mâché dragon at the Aug. 29 march.

Most of the detainees are taking ACDs, adjournments in contemplation of dismissal — which means that if you don't get arrested again within six months, the records are supposed to be sealed, but if you do get arrested again, you have to face both the old and new charges. Others received DATs, desk appearance tickets, essentially a summons.

Under a 1991 ruling by the state's highest court, everyone arrested in the city must be arraigned or released within 24 hours, except in extenuating circumstances. During the convention, hundreds of people were held for two days or longer, and were only released after State Supreme Court Justice John Cataldo held the city in contempt Sept. 2.

"It had the appearance of intentionally slowing it down," says Bruce Bentley. "They were arraigning people on serious felonies faster than they were on DATs."

"There's something fundamentally wrong with 10 hours in jail for shoplifting and 48 hours for protesting," says NYCLU executive director Donna Lieberman.

In the habeas-corpus writ filed by the National Lawyers Guild Sept. 1, Connie Steensma of Manhattan alleged that when she called Central Booking to find out what happened to her 17-year-old son, she was told "all of the demonstrators would be held until after President Bush left town." Kathie Bell says a police officer at Pier 57 told her "you're being detained to keep you off the streets." Other detainees say police were simply confused and disorganized.

Many people are already planning to sue the city for false arrest, being held for more than 24 hours, and the conditions at Pier 57. The NYCLU is "certainly" going to litigate on two issues, arrest tactics and the length and condition of detention, says Dunn. However, the suit will be aimed at stopping such practices, not at winning damages for individuals. The Guild plans to sue for unlawful arrests and infringement of First and Fourth Amendment rights, says Bentley. Additional information is likely to emerge in these lawsuits, when the city will be forced to turn over records to the plaintiffs' lawyers.

Judge Cataldo will hold a hearing Sept. 27 on whether to hold the city in criminal contempt for keeping 470 people in jail past the court-ordered deadline to release them.

The city's failure to meet that deadline, says Alex Vitale, "suggests that there was either gross negligence by numerous police supervisors... or there was an intent to keep people off the streets as long as possible."

Pier 57 'Not Club Med'

Those arrested were taken to Pier 57, a disused city bus depot on the West Side Highway. Police spokesperson Paul Browne told the press that the facility was clean and that no one was held there more than eight hours before being transferred to Central Booking.

That account differs radically from that of the prisoners who were kept in its barbed-wire-topped holding pens. The floors were covered with an oily substance and "chalky black stuff, like charcoal," says Wendy Stefanelli. "People were covered in this black dust." She estimates she was there about 12 hours.

"It was toxic," says Kathie Bell, who was held at Pier 57 for 15 hours. "People were starting to break out in welts."

Charlie Griffin, who works in a Manhattan hardware store, spent 11 hours at the pier after being arrested near Herald Square on Aug. 31. He says there were yellow signs on walls warning workers to wear protective goggles and gloves.

Jeffrey Parrot says he was held at Pier 57 for 19 hours, and police "took my cell phone because they said I could make a bomb."

"We spoke to a lot of the bus drivers who worked there," says Joel Kupferman of the New York Environmental Law and Justice Project. "They fueled the buses there, they changed the oil and the transmission fluid. A lot of it wound up on the floor. It's a modern-age tar pit." Kupferman says that over 100 people held there reported respiratory problems and skin inflammations that lasted more than a day, symptoms consistent with exposure to diesel fuel, but the city Department of Health "didn't want to hear it."

"They put down carpeting the last day," Kupferman says. Lawyers for the detainees are now testing 60 articles of clothing for toxic contamination, he adds.

In response, Mayor Bloomberg told the press that jails are "not supposed to be Club Med."

—S.W. AND T.S.



EDGAR MATA



EDGAR MATA



ANTRIM CASKEY

RNC 2004: "We were everywhere" – the IMC photo team. Open photo team meetings Thursdays at 7pm at 34 E. 29th Street, 2nd floor, between Park & Madison. All are welcome.

radical librarians provide movement with references

Out of the Stacks and Into the Streets

By EMILY WALTZ

More than 150 library workers fled the stacks during the Republican National Convention to join a protest-support group centered around doing what they do best: answering questions. The self-titled Radical Reference Librarians answered queries online and on the streets at protests, from demonstrators in need of anything from a little academic anti-Bush ammunition to directions to the nearest public restroom.

But as demonstrators and Republicans abandoned Manhattan after the convention, the librarians discovered one group of people that still needed reference assistance – the media.

In response, the librarians, library workers and library science students of Radical Reference plan to hold fact-checking workshops for independent journalists.

Jenna Freedman, a reference librarian at Barnard College in New York and a co-founder of Radical Reference, said that part of the group's original purpose was to assist in rumor control during protests. "We were there to track down the truth by calling back to librarians with web resources," she said.

The librarians have narrowed their focus after the convention. "By supporting the independent media, we are supporting the fight for democracy and all that librarians hold dear: truth, access to information and the struggle against censorship," Freedman said.

The librarians' nemesis, the USA Patriot Act, includes broadly worded sections that can be interpreted to allow the FBI to search library patrons' circulation records and Internet usage during investigations.

To fight back against the act and to alert activists of their services, the Radical Reference library workers scrapped the traditional role of shushing patrons and instead, led protesters in chants for freedom of information.

The librarians touted the letter "i" for information on their hats, patches and signs at protests. They provided protestors with lists of delegates' hotels and war profiteers and helped people find public restrooms and subways. Back at their reference desks, other library workers found information online and relayed it by phone to librarians on street reference duty.

The group also created a website prior to the convention that served as a question/answer service. People posted inquiries such as, "At what age are you old enough to be put into an adult cell when you are arrested?"

The switch to fact-checking workshops, Radical Reference members said, is part of their overarching goal to relay the truth. They will also offer instruction on source evaluation and the public resources available to journalists.

But librarians didn't create Radical Reference solely to answer questions and aid journalists. They are passionate about information and the right to access it, unmonitored by the government. They are so passionate, in fact, that one Radical Reference librarian got arrested while protesting.

Matthew Baiotto, a senior librarian for the New York Public Library, was in the Critical Mass bike ride when he was captured. The police drew orange nets across the street near Union Square to corral Baiotto and a group of other cyclists, he said.

Although it couldn't save Baiotto from jail, the librarians' intricate communication sys-

tem allowed Freedman, the co-founder, to dispatch nearby street reference librarians to check on his release.

The communication system extended beyond Radical Reference to a sprawling inter-library information cabal – a club for those who are literally in-the-know. Librarians everywhere heard about the group through e-mail lists and websites, and contributed information.

One of the most important tips Radical Reference received came from a library employee of the New York Historical Society. The informant hinted that Laura Bush would attend a luncheon at the Historical Society on the Wednesday of the convention.

The first lady represents what Radical Reference librarians consider hypocrisy – she was once a librarian, with a masters in library science and a job at a public library, but she married a man who signed the USA Patriot Act into law.

To remind Bush of her former career, Radical Reference librarians gathered outside the Historical Society on Central Park West with cardboard signs, chanting, "Money for books and education, not for war and occupation," and "Stand up, fight back, against the USA Patriot Act."

Although they weren't present at the luncheon, officials of the American Library Association share a similar perspective on the USA Patriot Act. A spokeswoman for the library association said the organization is non-partisan, but it "considers sections of the USA Patriot Act a present danger to the constitutional rights of library users." The spokeswoman, Larra Clark, said the library association had no official statement con-



ANY QUESTIONS?: Radical reference volunteer Lia Friedman (right) and friend Eve Novak tout their reference services outside the New York Public Library.

PHOTO: RADICAL REFERENCE

cerning Radical Reference.

Other librarians take a more conservative stance. One librarian at the Billerica Public Library in Massachusetts started a website called "Librarians For Bush" in direct response to "Librarians Against Bush," a subgroup of Radical Reference. "They are blowing the USA Patriot Act out of proportion," Greg McClay, creator of Librarians For Bush, said in a phone conversation. "They don't take into consideration that we are at war."

Radical Reference librarians may have put away their "i" hats and returned to the annals of the Dewey Decimal system, but they will continue to promote their work. Even if President Bush loses the election, the librarians said they would stay together to fight for patrons' rights and accurate reporting. "Besides, have you seen Kerry's platform?" Freedman said.

For more information, www.radicalreference.info



ANTRIM CASKEY



AMELIA H. KRALES



DAVID GOCHFELD

Election Polls Push Right

A recent Gallup poll showing George W. Bush with a 13 percent lead over John Kerry has spooked many people who fear another four years of Bush. A closer inspection of that poll reveals something more disturbing: deliberately manipulative polling techniques intended to create the false impression of a commanding lead for Bush. Similar methods were used by United States polling firms in Venezuela during the lead-up to the recall vote on Hugo Chavez. Ultimately Chavez won that vote decisively in spite of polls that showed him losing. Gallup is using some of the same tricks.

When Gallup calls households they always ask to speak to the youngest male of the household first. This produces a disproportionately male, and therefore disproportionately Republican sample.

Like most poll firms, Gallup deliberately tilts the people they poll based on their party identification in order to produce results that reflect the views of "likely voters." Unlike most other firms, though, Gallup's figures are based on the assumption that 40 percent of voters will be Republicans and 33 percent will be Democrats, even though all the data (including the past several elections) indicates that the reverse is much more likely to be the case.

Gallup has a reputation as a venerable polling firm, but their methods have become less and less reliable since they were sold by the Gallup family. The Gallup family jealously guarded the appearance of neutrality. By contrast, the present CEO of Gallup, James Clifton, contributes thousands of dollars to Republican candidates.

In the 2000 elections, Gallup showed Bush with a double-digit lead right before the election, when all the other major polls showed a neck and neck race. As we all now know, the Gallup polls in 2000 were dead wrong.

Political polling has been made doubly unreliable this year by two new factors. The first is that pollsters only call landlines while increasing numbers of people only have or only answer their cell phones. Anger at Bush has energized communities with traditionally low voter turnouts, producing a nationwide surge in new voter registrations. It is difficult for polling organizations to know how to accurately take these factors into account, so mainly they don't.

—Christopher Day

Riding the Peace Train

WITH LESLIE KAUFFMAN

BY SHEA DEAN

If you were reading the papers before the Republican convention, you probably heard about United for Peace and Justice, organizers of the Aug. 29 march against the Bush agenda. Despite squabbles with the city and the police department over the use of Central Park as a rally site (the city eventually sided with the grass), the event came off almost without a hitch, drawing 500,000 people.

Writer, editor and activist Leslie Kauffman serves as UFPJ's mobilizing coordinator, working to bring individuals into the peace movement. This week she sat down with *The Independent* to discuss her work, the march and the 2004 presidential elections.

How long have you worked for United for Peace and Justice?

I came on board pretty much as soon as there was a staff, in January 2003. It was supposed to be short-term, but the response to the February 15 march was enormous. We held another big march two days after the war began, on March 22, 2003. By May, when Bush declared mission accomplished and that major combat operations were over, we had hundreds of member groups — with more groups signing on. It was around then that it became clear that we were going to continue to have an office in New York City and a full-time staff.

Were you let down at all that the February 15 event didn't stop the war from happening in the first place?

Of course, to do the work you had to have some hope that we could actually stop the war, but I was fairly pessimistic about our ability to do so. What we did do — February 15 was the single largest day of protest in world history, ever. And while we didn't stop the war, the war has unfolded very differently than it would have if there hadn't been that massive

opposition. The Bush Administration was not able to rally international support in a way that it would have been able to otherwise.

What did it look like around here the few weeks leading up to this most recent march?

A lot different than it does now. At times there were fifty to a hundred people working in this space — just a constant whirl of activity: people putting together posters, meetings every night, lots of press conferences. Obviously there was a lot of news unfolding around the whole permit fight.

Do you feel it was a mistake to have accepted the West Side Highway rally site at first, only to turn it down later on?

You know, the West Side Highway decision was one of the difficult decisions UFPJ ever made. There was strong internal disagreement about whether or not to accept the site. It's clear that reversing the decision was absolutely the right thing, and that it was what our grassroots base wanted us to do. Obviously we would have liked to have had a march that went up past Madison Square Garden to Central Park through Times Square. That's what our ideal would have been. But in the end it all worked out. We had half a million people marching in the streets, twice what we were expecting months ago.

How do you measure the impact of a huge event like that?

It's always hard to say with a protest at the time what it has sparked, what it has achieved. Clearly one of the things we were looking to accomplish was to be on the front page of every major newspaper around the world on the opening day of the Republican convention. And we were. We were the top news story in every major media outlet around the world — *El Pais* in Spain, the major dailies in Japan, all except CNN.

So that was a concrete, measurable goal that we met. Our long-term framework, though, is the desire to see a grassroots movement flourish around the country. What I hope people will take away from an event like August 29 is that there are many different ways to contribute. We have a directory of hundreds of groups listed that you can contact and join. We have huge numbers of events listed on our calendar of ways to plug into different organizing efforts.

What would you say to all those people who went to the march, were really jazzed up by what they saw there, then came home and watched Bush's approval ratings improve?

I think it's really hard to see the effects of this kind of work. When you organize, you have to operate on faith that if you stir things up enough, and help inspire enough people to take action, that good things will come of it down the road, that changes will result.

If John Kerry is elected, do you think some of this activist fervor will die down?

The experience during the Clinton years was that there was an initial demobilization and then there was a quite powerful resurgence of some very innovative, dynamic, quite radical movements. You saw the flourishing of Earth First!, you saw the flourishing of the global justice activism that was on display in the Seattle WTO protests. There was a lot of really powerful, important organizing that came into being during the Clinton years.

So is it possible that there'll be some short-term demobilization as people become wrongly complacent thinking that electing a Democrat will be the answer to any number of problems the country faces? Yeah, it's possible. But I think that if so, it's likely to be short-lived.

United for Peace and Justice can be reached at www.unitedforpeace.org. (212) 868-5545

Surveillance Nation: "We Own the Streets," Says Chicago Mayor

"Cameras are the equivalent of hundreds of sets of eyes," said Chicago Mayor Richard Daley at the unveiling of a new federally-subsidized program to add hundreds of additional surveillance cameras throughout the city coordinated with an advanced recognition software able to identify suspicious activity. Chicago police already have 2,000 cameras in operation. What's new is the software that promises to highlight people "wandering" near important buildings, leaving packages unattended or pulling over on a highway, and it will be able to track individuals by following them from one camera to another. According to the *New York Times*, one central office in a fortified building would oversee cameras from a host of agencies including police, aviation, public transportation and sanitation, possibly mounted on street-sweeping vehicles. There is even the option for private security cameras to submit their feeds as well. City officials boast it could be the most sophisticated public monitoring system in the world and will be operational by 2006.

"We're not inside your home or your business," Mayor Daley said. "The city owns the sidewalks. We own the streets and we own the alleys." However, if you walk in public you can expect to be watched.

—Jed Brandt



The Mark of Rove

By Mike Burke

Now that Dan Rather and CBS News have admitted they were misled into reporting on forged documents about President Bush's National Guard service, a thorough investigation into who leaked the memos to CBS is in order.

The dominant thinking seems to be that if the documents were forged, they were leaked in an effort to harm Bush. But it is worth considering another possibility: the Bush team itself may have "leaked" the forged documents. The whole affair seems to bear what is known as "The Mark of Rove," as in Karl Rove, senior advisor to President Bush; Karl Rove the wizard of dirty tricks.

It is recognized that one of Bush's greatest weaknesses in the presidential campaign is Vietnam. While John Kerry fought in the war and earned three Purple Hearts, a young George W. Bush enlisted in the Texas National Guard with help. It turns out, from Ben Barnes, then-speaker of the Texas House. Barnes, of course, was a central figure in the *60 Minutes* story, as he admitted for the first time to the media to intervening to get Bush into the Guard and keep him out of Vietnam.

As investigations by the *Boston Globe* and others have uncovered, Bush's military record was shoddy at best, criminal at worst. He may be the first president who could have been tried for going AWOL. To counter Kerry's "war hero" image, Bush supporters have launched an attack on Kerry's record in Vietnam, questioning his account of his service. They have also portrayed him as having betrayed veterans when he spoke out against the war in his 1971 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

If Rove is behind the leaking of the allegedly forged documents shown on *60 Minutes*, it could well be phase two of a strategy to kill all criticism of our Commander in Chief's Vietnam War era record.

If you think this sounds like a nutty conspiracy theory, you probably haven't been following Karl Rove's career; a career replete with dirty tricks and sophisticated, pre-emptive political strikes.

Remember the allegations that Bush was arrested in 1972 on drug-possession charges, specifically cocaine? Today it is basically a non-story. But it is worth looking back at why.

In 1999, St. Martin's Press published a critical biography of Bush titled *Fortunate Son*. The book quoted an unnamed "high-ranking advisor to Bush" who revealed Bush's 1972 drug bust. The source told author J.H. Hatfield that Bush "was ordered by a Texas judge to perform community service in exchange for expunging his record showing illicit drug use."

Hatfield later said that his source was none other than Karl Rove. That might seem ridiculous, considering

Rove's lifelong loyalty to the Bushes and the fact that he now has an office adjacent to Bush's in the White House. But leaking the story to Hatfield essentially discredited the story and sent it into the realm of conspiracy theory. Soon after the book was published and just as St. Martin's was preparing a high-profile launching of the book, the *Dallas Morning News* ran a story revealing that Hatfield was a felon who had served time in jail. In response, St. Martin's pulled the book.

"When the media stumbled upon a story regarding George W. Bush's 1972 cocaine-possession arrest, Rove had to find a way to kill the story. He did so by destroying the messenger," says Sander Hicks, the former publisher of Soft Skull, which stepped in to publish *Fortunate Son*. "They knew the stories of Bush's cocaine and drink busts would come out, so they made certain that it would come out of the mouth of a guy they could smear," said journalist Greg Palast, who wrote the forward to the book.

If Rove was Hatfield's source, he certainly wasn't trying to expose Bush's drug use. Instead he was trying to discredit and ultimately kill the story. And it worked. Few reporters since have dared to touch it.

Consider also the history of Rove's dirty tricks, chronicled by James Moore and Wayne Slater in their book *Bush's Brain: How Karl Rove Made George W. Bush Presidential*.

In 1986, Moore and Slater report, Rove told reporters that someone had bugged the office where he was campaign manager for Texas gubernatorial candidate Bill Clements. On the morning of a major debate, Rove called a press conference. He said, "Obviously I don't know who did this. But there is no doubt in my mind that the only ones who would benefit from this detailed, sensitive information would be the political opposition." The press quickly assumed the bugging was done by Clements' opponent, Mark White, who was leading in the polls. On election day, Rove's candidate won and the source of the bug was never found – but many reporters later concluded that Rove himself had plotted it.

Four years ago during the Bush-Gore race, the Gore camp mysteriously obtained sensitive campaign materials from the Bush campaign, including a video of the Texas governor prepping for a debate and detailed campaign strategy notes. Rove soon accused the Gore campaign of secretly taping Bush. Later a former employee of a Bush campaign advisor admitted to supplying the information to Gore.

In trademark fashion, Rove's role in the case was never clear. He never leaves fingerprints behind. It is known as the "Mark of Rove."

It may well have returned in the form of Times New Roman font on forged documents.



By A.K. Gupta

Having opened the gates of hell in Iraq, the Bush Administration is diving right in. White House and Pentagon officials say they plan to reconquer rebel towns in the "Sunni Triangle" following the U.S. election.

The timing is integral to the Bush-Cheney campaign strategy. The White House is planning to besiege Iraqi cities after the presidential vote so as not to have its message of an "improving Iraq" marred by images of massive civilian and military casualties.

Dexter Filkins wrote in the *New York Times* Sept. 19, "A senior American commander said the military intended to take back Fallujah and other rebel areas ... as early as November or December, the deadline the Americans have given themselves for restoring Iraqi government control across the country."

The deadline is to allow time to organize Iraqi elections in January for a transitional national assembly. Iraq's elections, and similar ones in Afghanistan slated for Oct. 9, are central to promoting Bush's campaign message: Iraq is part of the war on terror, everything is improving there, increasing attacks are a sign of the insurgents' desperation, and we are winning.

In Afghanistan, however, more than 30 election workers have been killed, the 18 presidential candidates can't campaign outside of Kabul because of a lack of security (President Hamid Karzai was forced to abandon his only campaign rally to date after a rocket narrowly missed his helicopter in the town of Gardez), and anti-U.S. forces are intimidating voter educators. Says one provincial election coordinator, "We have no newspapers, no local radio, so we depend on our teams of civic educators. And they are scared."

Karzai is favored heavily to win whatever quaelection ensues, allowing Bush to make a surprise visit to Kabul in October to congratulate the Afghan president on winning re-election. Another sign of progress.

To prepare for Iraq's elections, the Pentagon plans to soften up the Sunni Arab electorate with bombing (Fallujah is already being bombed daily). Former Bill Clinton adviser Sidney Blumenthal spoke with an ex-Marine Corps commandant who predicts that the Bush administration will "flatten" Fallujah "after the first Tuesday in November." In *The Guardian* on Sept. 16, Blumenthal quotes retired Gen. Joseph Hoare, who explains, "U.S. military forces would prevail, casualties would be high, there would be inconclusive results with respect to the bad guys, their leadership would escape, and civilians would be caught in the middle."

The model may very well be the Iraqi city of Tal Afar. Saying they were flushing out "foreign

terrorists," U.S. forces encircled the city in early September, turned off electricity and water for days, and bombed residential areas. At least 55 people were killed, many of them civilians, according to the city hospital. A humanitarian crisis ensued as 150,000 people – most of Tal Afar – fled the bombardment.

Yet the U.S. attack is scheduled to begin at the same time voter registration commences in 600 offices throughout Iraq for an estimated 12 million potential voters. *The Times* reports that registration will start Nov. 1 and last for six weeks, "requiring thousands of police officers and possibly troops to protect them."

The aim is to restore "Iraqi government control," but Iraq's security forces exist only on paper. During the siege of Tal Afar, according to the *Washington Post*, more than 500 Iraqi police fled or joined the resistance. Only 83 took part in the assault, receiving a one-month bonus of \$200 each from a U.S. Army colonel.

With the resistance targeting collaborators, finding thousands of Iraqi civilians to staff the registration offices will be almost impossible. At least 45 Iraqi translators have been killed in Baghdad alone since the beginning of 2004. No one is safe, from drivers to clothes washers to carpenters. Iraq's own election commission has adopted a "deliberate low profile" out of fear, according to a U.N. report, thus hampering public outreach.

The United Nations is supposed to provide key support, but it "has been unable to field more than a skeleton staff in Baghdad out of fears for the staff members' safety," according to the *Baltimore Sun*. Also skipping town is the British Army. *The London Observer* states, "The main British combat force in Iraq, about 5,000-strong, will be reduced by around a third by the end of October," just as the planned U.S. assault is about to begin.

U.S. forces and their Iraqi allies are already spinning a limited election as a legitimate one. Prime Minister Ayad Allawi has said that towns such as Fallujah could be bypassed in the vote. The Bush Administration is suggesting that limiting the vote to 18 cities may be sufficient. Filkins states in the *Times*, "At a minimum, the American commander said, local conditions would have to be secure for voting to take place in the country's 18 provincial capitals for the election to be considered legitimate."

The Association of Muslim Scholars, a body of clerics representing 3,000 Sunni mosques in Iraq, has come out against the election. One leader said, "As long as we are under military occupation, honest elections are impossible."

Iraq's elections are intimately connected to the U.S. election. Allawi recently visited the U.S. to promote the Bush campaign message. Echoing his benefactors, Allawi told ABC News that the intensity of resistance attacks, which totaled 2,700 in August and wounded some 1,100 GIs, shows that insurgents are making a "last stand, so they are putting a very severe fight on Iraq. We are winning."

Staying on message, Allawi added, "Iraq is fighting this war on behalf of the civilized nations.... If this is

not happening in Iraq, New York will be hit, Washington will be hit, London will be hit, Paris will be hit."

When Bush and Allawi say the war has made America safer, they are right, in a perverse sense. Middle East fanatics no longer need to try penetrating fortress America in the hopes of killing infidels when more than 150,000 Americans are available for target practice in Iraq.

The insurgency is mostly homegrown, created by the occupation itself and dire economic circumstances, and motivated by nationalism and religion. But the Iraq war is also becoming a pan-Arab and Muslim battle, fed by satellite television images of Iraqis blown apart, incinerated and gunned down during the last 18 months. Colin Freeman, a freelance reporter in Iraq, says the country has become a "magnet for extremists and terrorists, not just from the Middle East but as far away as central Africa."

Nir Rosen, one of the few Western journalists who has ventured into rebel-held Fallujah, reported in July on video discs for sale that feature, "Young foreign fighters from Saudi Arabia and other countries... giving testimonies before going out on suicide operations."

Last year, the Pentagon put the number of insurgents in Iraq at 5,000, never changing the number even as it issued press releases claiming to have killed hundreds and arrested thousands of rebels. Now it has upped the figure to 20,000. But one military analyst puts the number of Sunni insurgents alone at 100,000.

There is increasing coordination between the Iraqi resistance and internationalists. As the resistance has shifted from hit-and-run tactics of improvised explosive devices and mortar attacks to standing and fighting in complex ambushes, suicide bombers are now being used against U.S. military convoys, not just stationary targets.

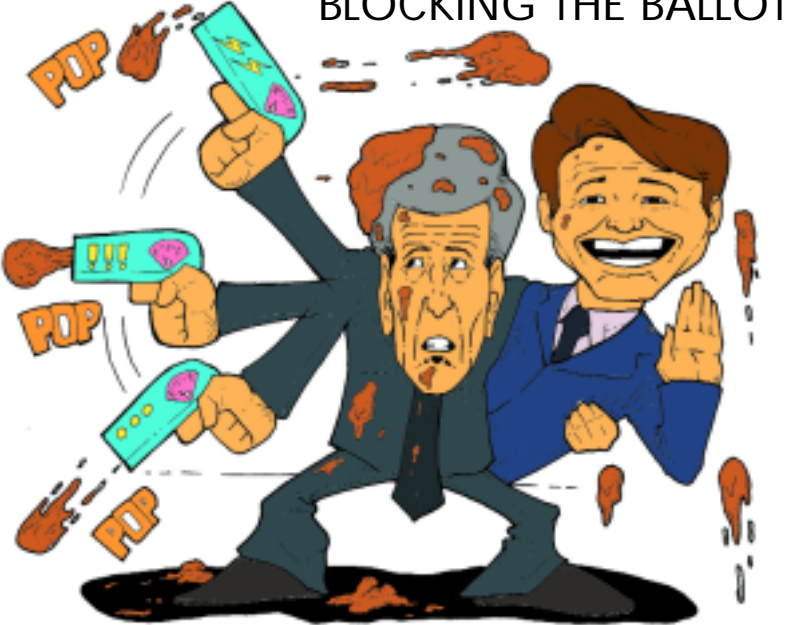
These attacks are filmed, the footage then used in popular homemade videos that serve as recruiting devices for the resistance throughout the region. Rosen sampled the Fallujah cinema, which "depicted various operations conducted by the resistance, primarily against U.S. military targets, as well as various crimes of the occupation, destroyed homes, abusing prisoners, and a lot of bloody dead people accompanied by mournful chanting Islamic music."

Come January, there will be plenty of new recruiting videos if the Pentagon has its way. Even if Iraq's elections occur, many Iraqis will likely dismiss them as illegitimate, intensifying the resistance. A second Bush Administration promises years of grinding and spreading warfare in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia has its own simmering rebellion, and the neocons in power want to bomb Syria or Iran next.

More ominous, in these 21st century conflicts, the resistance eventually takes the war to the occupying country, as Israelis and Russians can attest. Republicans would probably welcome another horrific attack on U.S. soil. It is all they need to eliminate civil liberties and social services, and fully impose their authoritarian and reactionary agenda.

Neutralizing Nader

BLOCKING THE BALLOT



By Shawn Redden

The Republican Party knocks voters off the ballot. The Democratic Party knocks candidates off the ballot." This statement by Kevin Zeese, spokesperson for Presidential candidate Ralph Nader and running mate, Peter Camejo, illustrates the growing anger of the Nader campaign with the Democrats' attempts to deny them ballot access.

The Democratic Party, charges the Nader campaign, is conspiring with public officials, lawyers and corporate lobbyists to force the three-time presidential candidate to expend precious resources in state-by-state court battles rather than articulating a campaign message.

Toby Moffet, a former Democratic Congressman from Connecticut who worked with Nader decades ago, recently started a group called The Ballot Project whose mission, Moffet said, is to "neutralize [Nader's] campaign by forcing him to spend money and resources" defending his right to appear on the ballot.

David Jones, a former staffer for Rep. Dick Gephardt (D-MO), founded the National Progress Fund, which coordinates strategies to remove the Nader-Camejo ticket from the ballot. Jones's website, NaderFactor.org, recently began airing ads charging a conspiracy by the GOP to fund Nader. Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe claimed that, "in state after state, Nader has become an extension of the Republican Party and their corporate backers."

Writing in the *Washington Post* on Sept. 5, Nader counters that only four percent of his campaign contributions have come from Republicans. In a press release dated Aug. 19, the Center for Responsive Politics stated that 51 donors identified as Republicans donated \$54,300 to Nader while contributing even more – \$66,000 – to Democrats.

On Aug. 30, Maine Democratic Party chairwoman Dorothy Melanson testified in a public hearing that the national Democratic Party is funding efforts throughout the country to stop Nader from appearing on ballots.

In Pennsylvania, Democrats utilized help from Reed Smith, a corporate law firm that supports many Republican candidates, to keep Nader off the ballot. Thus far, they have succeeded, arguing that his appearance on the ballot as an independent violates state law because he is running under the Reform Party on other state ballots. An appeal by Nader to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is pending.

Democratic Secretary of State Bill Bradbury removed Nader from Oregon's ballot, claiming that pages of petitions signed by registered voters were incorrectly numbered. After these signatures were purged, a second set of petitions were disqualified,

preventing Nader from appearing on the ballot. District Judge Paul Lipscomb intervened in the matter, asserting that "Secretary of State Bill Bradbury violated election laws," and in fact, "made up laws" to deny Nader ballot access. Nader will appear on the ballot.

On Sept. 17, the Florida Supreme Court, as well as district judges in Colorado and New Mexico, ruled on legal challenges brought by the Democratic Party against Nader/Camejo.

A district judge in Colorado rejected the Democrats' argument that because Nader was not affiliated with the Reform Party for a year before he was nominated, Nader had no right to ballot access.

New Mexico Judge Wendy York, who contributed \$1,000 to John Kerry's campaign in April, ruled that Nader's appearance on the Reform ticket in other states prohibited him from running as an independent. York's ruling overturned the precedent set by other independent candidates in the state. In 1980, Rep. John Anderson ran in New Mexico as an independent presidential candidate while running under a variety of parties in other states. The Nader campaign has appealed this ruling.

In Florida, a Democratic judge ruled that the Reform Party was unable to nominate a candidate because they were not a national party, barring Nader from the ballot. Florida's Supreme Court rejected this argument, reinstating Nader by a 6-1 verdict.

Additionally, the Democratic Party has challenged or is challenging Nader in California, Texas, Virginia, Illinois, Idaho, Delaware, Washington, West Virginia, Arizona, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan and others.

Interestingly, the St. Petersburg Times reported that the Bush campaign filed its election documents a day late to the Florida Secretary of State. Thus, President Bush has no legal right to appear on the ballot in Florida. Yet, rather than using their resources to challenge the Bush campaign, Florida Democrats chose to fight Nader instead.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANK REYNOSO

Darfur Waits

U.N. Deliberates

BY DONALD PANETH

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. – The extraordinary crisis of violence, displacement of people, burning of villages, rape and murder in the Darfur region of Sudan is producing still another go-slow response in the United Nations Security Council.

The Council, which has been deliberating the Darfur crisis since May, adopted a resolution on Sept. 18 calling for the appointment of a commission to determine "whether or not acts of genocide have occurred" and declaring that the Council would later consider "taking additional measures."

The vote was 11 in favor, none opposed, four abstentions. China, Russia, Algeria and Pakistan abstained, indicating a continuing division in the Council that goes beyond differences on this particular resolution.

Sponsoring the resolution were the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Romania and Spain. The U.S. representative, John C. Danforth, summarized the situation in Darfur. It is the largest humanitarian disaster in the world today, he said. Fifty thousand people have already died, with an estimated 8,000 deaths taking place monthly. Some 1.2 million persons have fled their homes, with about 100,000 refugees flowing into neighboring Chad. Four hundred villages have been destroyed.

Sudanese government helicopters, bombers and soldiers, backed up by Arab "Janjaweed" horsemen, attack and destroy the villages, raping, killing and putting their inhabitants to flight, he said.

A World Health Organization survey reported Sept. 13 that displaced people in north and west Darfur "are dying at between three and six times the expected rate."

The victims are black farmers, whose land is apparently coveted by the Sudanese central government in Khartoum.

Those countries abstaining on the resolution declared that the Sudanese authorities have been taking action in accordance with previous U.N. resolutions of June 11 and July 30, that the threat of sanctions – referred to in the resolution as "additional measures" – would do more harm than good, and that more humanitarian assistance was reaching the displaced population.

Word had been received here earlier in the week that the first convoy of trucks carrying U.N. World Food Programme aid across the Sahara desert had arrived at a refugee camp in eastern Chad on Sept. 9, completing a 2,800-kilometer journey from Libya's Mediterranean coast.

Twenty trucks loaded with 440 metric tons of wheat flour had arrived in the town of Bahai after a 12-day drive. The wheat flour would feed some 30,000 people for one month.

At one time, Danforth's American accent might have been heartening, perhaps reassuring, but in the Council chamber on Saturday it seemed suspect, even threatening. Passage of the Darfur resolution enables President Bush to address the opening of the annual General Assembly Sept. 21 from a positive viewpoint – the United States acting through the United Nations in an emergency situation. And yet Bush will still be able to criticize the Security Council for its lack of unity.

The Bush administration is extremely adept at playing a situation from every conceivable angle, partly because they have the manpower and money to do it.

In the resolution's background is Secretary of State Colin L. Powell's Sept. 9 characterization of the Darfur events as genocide in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations committee. Following that, Fred Eckhard, spokesman for U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, said that Powell's declaration could be viewed as tantamount to invoking Article 8 of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

Article 8 provides that any adherent to the Convention may call upon the U.N. to suppress acts of genocide.

The latest U.N. resolution comes nowhere close to that. Rather, it stirs memories of previous U.N. failures for which Annan shared responsibility in Srebrenica, the former Yugoslavia in 1995 and Rwanda in 1994. Instead of giving the reason for its weakness, however, both Annan and Danforth left the Council meeting before it was over. Correspondents did not get an opportunity to question them, as they had expected to.



Above: Irene Peña (real name withheld) speaks about land development in the Philippines.

Below: Houses built by Santa Clara residents. Most of these homes are slated for destruction. PHOTOS BY LEAH OBIAS.

The Port or the People

FILIPINO COMMUNITY VOWS FIGHT TO THE DEATH

Nestled in the Western coast of the Philippine archipelago, south of Manila, the multi-billion peso Batangas Port is currently in the second of its four phases of development.

BY LEAH OBIAS

SANTA CLARA, PHILIPPINES – Hand-painted signs across from the project site read "NO TO PHASE II." The signs were created by the people of Santa Clara, whose homes were demolished to clear space for the port's construction. Ten years after demolition, they are still struggling to remain on their land, and intend to stay there and fight until they die.

With financing from the Japanese government, the development of the project took shape in the 1990s, early in the Fidel Ramos presidency. Ramos had envisioned a globally competitive Philippine economy. A new international port in Batangas would lessen traffic in Manila Bay and ease the transfer of domestic goods from the southern islands to the capital region. By 1994, the project was poised to begin in earnest – without the agreement of the 1,467 families living on the land.

Refusing to move, the people of Santa Clara created a warning signal: the striking of an empty container. On the morning of June 27, 1994, someone began to strike. The demolition of the community had begun. Hundreds of uniformed Philippine National Police officers and private contractors used tear gas and fired guns in the air. Some residents linked arms and resisted, while others threw stones. One resident was shot and others were hospitalized. Several contractors and policemen were also injured.

Some residents decided to move to the two temporary relocation sites offered by the government after demolition, but more than 400 families decided to stay. Many had been on the land for a century,

working as fisherfolk, vendors or porters. They now occupy land the size of a baseball field, adjacent to a government project many times that size.

I arrived in Santa Clara in the late afternoon, after having spent hours traveling there in a jeepney – a refurbished American World War II vehicle now used as public transportation. I had traveled via a dirt road that Santa Clarans had cleared through marshland. The road will be turned into an access road for the port in exchange for electricity and a water system in the community.

My host, Irene Peña, welcomes me into her home, a simple structure of one room with an attached bamboo kitchen and an open-air porch. Irene is a former local official and the keeper of the Santa Clarans' recent documented history. She keeps a photo album of the demolition and a tome of legal papers from the battle the community fought to maintain their property.

Santa Clarans take pride in having won recognition as legal residents. Their struggle now is for livelihood. During construction of the port, Congress passed several laws favoring privatization. Contracts were given to skilled workers, and employment in the community plummeted. Women turned to sex work, which increased with the presence of prostitution rings, and as Irene explained, people began selling drugs in order to survive.

According to a report issued by Ateneo de Manila University assessing the demolition and relocation, 87 percent of respondents in the Balete relocation site and 96 percent in the Sico site said they had less employment opportunities than

they did before relocation.

"Aggression during WWII, according to our parents, was so grave," Irene says. "But for the second time, another war of invasion has come to Santa Clara."

Elected captain of the *barangay* (the equivalent of a town), Irene was ousted by a top-down campaign led by the Philippines Port Authority, ostensibly because of her militant opposition to the port, as well her ability to mobilize residents.

As night falls, her home transforms into a community center. A young man plays guitar on her porch. A group of teenagers and children begin to sing, while the older women of the community prepare dinner.

One of my travel companions asks Irene how the community is coping. With two more phases of development pending, another demolition is possible. "Nothing will free us," Irene responds. "Nobody can free us, but only our strength could free us, and determination. The strength and determination to fight to the last drop of our blood is the only salvation."



ATROCITIES HAVE
DOUBLED UNDER
COLOMBIAN PRESIDENT

Uribe Tied to Drug Cartel

BY BILL WEINBERG

The emergence of a 1991 report from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) naming current Colombian President Alvaro Uribe as a high-level operative of the notorious Medellín cartel has been an embarrassment for both the United States and its top South American ally. Meanwhile, rights groups in Colombia claim that atrocities have doubled under Uribe's rule – and the antimilitarist movement has again been targeted for attack.

The Sept. 23, 1991, DIA report was released under the Freedom of Information Act to a D.C.-based research group, the National Security Archives. The report asserts that Uribe, then a senator from the department of Antioquia, was "dedicated to collaboration with the Medellín cartel at high government levels." It named him as a "close personal friend" of cartel kingpin Pablo Escobar, and claimed he helped Escobar secure his seat as an auxiliary congressman.

An Uribe spokesman dismissed the report as preliminary, saying that Uribe was studying at Harvard in 1991. Rob Zimmerman, a spokesman for the U.S. State Department, told the *New York Times*: "We completely disavow these allegations about President Uribe. We have no credible information that substantiates or corroborates the allegations in an unevaluated 1991 report."

But the National Security Archives' Michael Evans said: "We now know that the DIA... had information indicating that Alvaro Uribe was one of Colombia's top drug-trafficking figures."

Washington portrays Uribe as a key ally in the war on drugs and terrorism, boasting that his administration has extradited 150 accused traffickers to the U.S., more than twice the number extradited in his predecessor's four-year term. But there have been persistent claims that as chief of Colombia's civil aviation authority in the late 1980s, Uribe protected drug flights.

RIGHTS ACTIVIST: ATROCITIES HAVE DOUBLED UNDER URIBE
Colombian human rights advocate Yenly Angelica Mendez of the group Humanidad Vigente, which works closely with peasant groups in militarized rural areas, said that assassinations and arbitrary imprisonment

have doubled under Uribe.

In an interview with the independent Colombian press agency, Anncol, Mendez said: "Since the start of the present administration human-rights violations in [the northeastern region of] Arauca have risen about 100 percent. The primary victims have been the social movements, who at the moment have more than 10 leaders jailed, primarily those with a record of uncompromising and dedicated protest against human-rights violations, and of promoting a model of alternative development..."

Mendez harshly criticized U.S. support for the Uribe regime: "The United States plays a primary role in the violation of human rights in Arauca... They give large amounts of aid to the 18th Brigade in Arauca, despite the prohibition against giving aid to military units which are involved in human rights violations. This Brigade is involved in many human rights violations, and this aid is used to continue them."

PARA BOSSES ADDRESS CONGRESS

Meanwhile, Uribe's so-called "peace dialogue" with the right-wing paramilitaries continues – which critics see as a means of legitimizing the terror network and bringing it under closer government control. On July 28, Salvatore Mancuso, now de facto leader of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), spoke before Colombia's congress along with his fellow warlords Ramon Isaza and Ivan Roberto Duque. The leaders of the 20,000-strong AUC had been given safe conduct to travel to Bogotá from the "safe haven" the paramilitary network was granted in the north of the country as a condition of the talks. Mancuso said the paramilitary leaders should not be imprisoned, but should be honored for saving Colombia from becoming "another Cuba."

Uribe is proposing that AUC leaders be "confined" for five to ten years, but not necessarily in prison, as a compromise measure. This possibility was not raised in prospective talks with the leftist National Liberation Army, whose imprisoned leader Francisco Galán addressed Colombia's congress in June.



CHAIM GARCIA

PEACE COMMUNITY UNDER ATTACK

While the paramilitaries claim to oppose leftist guerrillas, Colombia's antimilitarist movement has recently been targeted for attack. On July 29, the home of a leading member of Red Juvenil, an antiwar group in Medellín, was visited by two armed men who first said they were from the AUC, and later claimed to be from the Administrative Security Department, a government enforcement agency. The Red Juvenil activist was out at the time, but her mother was at home with a two-month-old baby. The mother was menaced with pistols, tied up and locked in the bathroom as the men searched the house.

New threats and violence are also reported from the Antioquia village of San José de Apartado, a self-proclaimed "peace community" which has declared its non-cooperation with all armed groups. On Aug. 11, a home in San José was torn by an explosion which left two women dead and two others injured, including the ten-year-old son of one of the women. The community's statement on the incident said the explosion was caused by a grenade left behind by the army months earlier during fighting with guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia in a banana field in the hamlet of La Unión.

The statement also said that members of the peace community have been verbally threatened by paramilitaries in recent weeks, and that the road linking the village to the nearest town, Apartado, has become increasingly dangerous. On July 30, a local merchant who sold water in San José was killed by paramilitaries on the road. On Aug. 2, paramilitaries told San José residents in the Apartado bus terminal that they would launch another blockade of the community and kill the community's leaders.

The statement closed with an expression of determination in the face of the threats and violence: "We again reiterate our commitment to continue building paths of dignity in the midst of the war."

A longer version originally appeared in World War 3 Report-ww3report.com

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WORLD IN BRIEF

RUSSIA LAUNCHES BUSH-STYLE 'WAR ON TERROR,' NEO-CONS BACK CHECHEN INDEPENDENCE

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov lashed out at Western "double standards" towards the "war on terror" in the aftermath of the Beslan school hostage crisis that left 326 dead and hundreds more wounded in a small, southern Russian town. The United States and the United Kingdom have both provided asylum to Chechen separatist Aslan Mashkhadov, who Russia blames along with rebel leader Shamil Basayev for the deaths. Basayev claimed responsibility for seizing the school, as well as the August bombing of two commercial airliners.

Well-connected neo-cons including Richard Perle, Elliot Abrams and former CIA director R. James Woolsey, working through the American Committee for Peace in Chechnya, have longstanding relations with Chechen leaders deemed "terrorists" by the Russian government. The United States has called for a "negotiated settlement" to the war in Chechnya, currently part of Russia, while establishing military bases in Georgia, the largest country in the Caucasus mountains and former Soviet republic.

Russian President Vladimir Putin expanded his authority by re-introducing party-list elections and bringing regional governors under central appointment.

CUBA OFFERS HIV PREVENTION AND DRUGS TO CARIBBEAN

Cuba has offered to train doctors and provide cheap anti-retrovirals to stem the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Caribbean. Caribbean infection rates overall are second only to sub-Saharan Africa, while Cuba has one of the world's lowest HIV infection rates. Cuba first gained attention in the fight against AIDS for its early, controversial policy of quarantining HIV-positive citizens. They quickly adapted their health programs to concentrate on preventive measures including mandatory testing, low-cost condoms and education. Cuba's socialized health system produces cheap anti-retrovirals, which will be sold at "highly competitive" prices to neighboring countries, undercutting U.S. pharmaceutical corporations. Regional leaders have responded with enthusiasm.

CHAVEZ CANCELS TRIP TO U.N., VISIT TO HARLEM

For the second time, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has cancelled a trip to the United States to attend the United Nations General Assembly. The first time Chavez backed out of coming to New York, he insinuated a U.S. plot to down his plane. This time around, Chavez cited mechanical problems with his plane and instead visited the site of disputed clashes near the Colombian border.

Colombian officials allege that Marxist rebels were behind the killing of several Venezuelan soldiers on their side of the chaotic 1,400 mile border. Venezuela has repeatedly clashed with right-wing Colombian paramilitaries in the area, and caught over 80 of them outside of Caracas in the run-up to the recent referendum on Chavez's presidency.

Chavez had been scheduled to speak to capacity crowds at Riverside Church in Harlem.

INDIA'S ANTI-TERRORIST LAW REPEALED

India's Home Minister Shivraj Patil announced at a press conference on Sept 17 that the government plans to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) and will amend another law to cover terrorism.

The Bharatiya Janata party enacted Pota in March 2002, after an attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001. The act has been widely viewed as misused, especially against Muslims. The act includes provisions that can keep the accused jailed for a year without bail and requires the accused to prove his or her innocence, rather than the prosecution prove his or her guilt.



MATTHEW HIBBEN

EVICTED

Cops Crack Down on Guatemalan Land Occupation

By NEELA GHOSHAL

While activists took the streets of New York Aug. 31 in response to the Republican National Convention, a direct action of a different sort, in the Guatemalan state of Retalhuleu, culminated in brutal violence. Police officers surrounded campesinos who had taken over the Nueva Linda plantation in the municipality of Champerico. The ensuing confrontation resulted in at least nine deaths and dozens wounded or missing.

"Once more it has been shown that the government defends the interests of large plantation owners through violence," said Daniel Pascual, a leader of the National Coordinating Body of Campesino Organizations, in an interview with Guatemalan national daily newspaper, *El Periódico*.

Government representatives justified the violence, blaming it on the presence of armed campesinos. "Although we regret the deaths that occurred, this eviction complied with the law," said Carlos Zúñiga of the Chamber of Agriculture. "The police officers were taken by surprise by violent and armed people who, in spite of having lost the judicial process, continue creating instability in the country."

The violence at Nueva Linda harkens back to the scorched earth policies of the early 1980s, when hundreds of Mayan villages were

razed to the ground by the army. Witnesses cited the burning of 500 houses at Nueva Linda, the extrajudicial executions of at least three campesinos, and the beating of journalists who witnessed the events.

A HISTORY OF OCCUPATIONS

Guatemala has a long history of land takeovers, in which landless peasants, reluctant to relocate to city shantytowns and sweatshops, peacefully occupy plantations, carving out spots to plant their corn and beans. Land reform has not been a priority of Guatemalan governments since the days of Jacobo Arbenz, the liberal president deposed by the 1954 CIA-orchestrated coup that touched off 36 years of civil war. While it reemerged as a theme in the nation's 1996 Peace Accords, progress has been slow to nonexistent. A government agency has been established to address land claims, but hundreds of communities, many uprooted during the war, remain on a waiting list. Illegal plantation occupations have been, for many, the only way to survive.

A national strike organized by workers and campesinos on June 8 so successfully immobilized the nation's economy that President Oscar Berger, of the conservative Grand National Alliance, immediately promised a 90-day moratorium on violent evictions of peasants while reviewing potential land

reform strategies. In return, groups representing the peasants agreed to hold off on protests for the duration of the 90 days.

The agreement broke down with the Nueva Linda eviction, which Justo Mendoza of the National Coordinator of Indigenous and Campesino Communities described as "a massacre."

"THEIR VOICE WAS NEVER HEARD"

The Nueva Linda occupation began in protest of the government's inaction in investigating the disappearance of a campesino leader. Hector René Reyes Pérez, an administrator at Nueva Linda known for taking the side of the workers, disappeared on Sept. 5, 2003. His disappearance followed a disagreement with plantation owner Vidal Fernández Alejos. Reyes was last seen with the owner's bodyguard, Victor Chinchilla.

On Oct. 13 of last year, campesinos occupied the plantation in protest, demanding an investigation of Reyes's disappearance. They would leave, they declared, once the Ministry of Justice complied with its duties in the investigation.

On Aug. 25, a new Ministry of the Interior, Carlos Vielmann, promised to "get tough on the land invasions." He delivered on that promise Aug. 31.

Between 1,000 and 2,000 heavily armed police officers surrounded the community at 5 a.m. to initiate a dialogue with the campesinos, some of whom were also armed. It is unclear how the violence began. Carlos Quintana Saravia, governor of Retalhuleu, charged the campesinos with initiating the conflict by throwing homemade bombs at the police. Alexander Toro of the Human Rights Ombuds office demurred, citing a police blueprint for the eviction stating that if the campesinos refused to leave, the police would proceed with force.

Witnesses reported unprovoked police brutality. Journalists videotaped the police shooting an elderly man six times. They were subsequently beaten by police, their equipment confiscated. The Guatemalan newspaper *Nuestro Diario* quoted one journalist: "A police officer told me 'If you take photos I'm going to kill you just like him' - and then he pointed his gun at a campesino and killed him."

Julia Cabrera, a single mother of 10 children, told *El Periódico* that she witnessed police shoot her sixteen-year-old son twice in the back, killing him. Another child disappeared. "But I did not see who took my six-month old baby," said Cabrera, "because the police grabbed me by the hair and began to hit me."

President Berger argued that the extreme measures taken by the police were necessary since the campesinos were armed and, he claimed, had links to organized crime.

Guatemala's Congress has taken the campesinos' side, condemning the violence and calling for an investigation. A commission has been formed to search for the 20 to 30 people who were missing following the violence. Campesinos told representatives of the Human Rights Ombuds office that they saw police hastily throw bodies into a mass grave on the plantation, but a grave has not yet been located.

Campesino organizer Ursula Roldán told *El Periódico* that the events were a result of government inaction in the Reyes case and lack of attention to campesino concerns. "The indigenous and campesino groups organized marches and protests so that [Reyes's disappearance] could be clarified, but their voice was never heard," said Roldán.

WORLD WAR 3 REPORT

VIGILANT, INDEPENDENT SENTRY OF TRUTH IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Bill Weinberg, Editor

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Text Mob Rule

TECHING BACK THE CITY

BY JEREMY SCAHILL

The guerrilla musicians from the Infernal Noise Brigade were tuning their instruments, preparing to lead an unannounced, unpermitted march from Union Square to Madison Square Garden. Independent journalists from the Indymedia Center were putting fresh cassettes in their video cameras. The cops were milling about waiting for whatever was coming.

Then, Union Square started beeping with a symphony of cell-phone text-message alerts. "From comms-dispatch," read the message. "Reports of police using orange mesh fencing to surround protesters at Herald Square. Riot cops moving in. Cameras, medics and legal observers needed."

Throughout the Republican convention, independent journalists and activist groups used text-messaging technology to coordinate a groundbreaking week of direct action and comprehensive news reporting. It was one of the many creative, guerrilla tactics employed by the decentralized resistance movement in North America that grew out of the WTO protests in Seattle in 1999. In contrast to the multimillion dollar security budgets for the Democratic and Republican conventions and at the recent FTAA meetings in Miami, activists are using technology that is virtually cost-free to mobilize hundreds of actions and thousands of activists.

In addition to the various groups using text messaging to send out action alerts, warnings, news and announcements, the New York City Independent Media Center set up an automated "info-line" that activists could call 24 hours a day to hear breaking news from Indymedia, a calendar of events or a live stream from the A-noise radio collective, which was broadcasting from the streets. At protests past, the work of Indymedia was primarily available to people at home through the Internet. In New York, it went mobile. And it was a huge success.

"Our task is to help facilitate horizontal communication and information distribution to all the activists in the streets," says Evan Henshaw-Plath, the Indymedia tech activist who developed the info-line concept. "The police want to keep the protests under control and stay a step ahead of the protesters. So, all of this communications infrastructure helps on a tactical level. We've appropriated technology as an essential

tool for radical social change.

"When there is a blockade or arrests, activists know where to go or how to avoid arrest," Henshaw-Plath says. "All of this helps make the protest more effective."

The project grew out of a concept developed by Aspiration Tech of San Francisco a few weeks before the RNC. It was based on a software package called Asterisk, which takes information from the Web and converts it to speech to provide it to mobile phones. "It was a last-minute project, which showed how, using free software and about \$10, we could create quality phone-based information systems," says Henshaw-Plath. After getting the system set up, he adds, a casual conversation lead to the topic of "wouldn't it be cool to do something like this for the RNC protests next week?" Despite almost no publicity, the service received more than 2,000 calls over a four-day period.

The text messaging was coordinated primarily by using a free service from a website called TXTMob.com. Users could create a personal account free of charge and sign up for groups similar to e-mail list-serves. Some were unmoderated and had unreliable information. But others, like the ones operated by nyc.indymedia.org and the NY Comms collective, were moderated and accurate.

"There is this ongoing problem of lack of media coverage of protest activity, particularly in the United States," says the founder of TXTMob.com, who goes by the nom de guerre of John Henry. "Text-messaging becomes another tool in the activist arsenal, a way of representing their actions to the outside world in a direct manner, rather than being dependent upon establishment mass media to tell their story for them."

TXTMob launched two days before the Democratic National Convention in Boston. Its overhead cost was the donated labor of Henry and others from the Institute for Applied Autonomy, an art and engi-

neering collective that develops technologies for political dissent. In Boston, 200 people subscribed to the service. In New York, there were more than 5,500, a number that far exceeded Henry's expectations.

"Having this kind of communication infrastructure allows much more spontaneous, fluid kinds of actions that can be taken in response to real-time events," says Henry. "It maintains the element of surprise, which ultimately makes them more effective."

A perfect example of this was on Aug. 29, when the Mouse Bloc staged a series of spontaneous street theater protests in Times Square. During the RNC, Republican delegates had been offered discounts to Broadway shows ahead of the week's activities. For hours, the police chased activists around as they confronted delegates coming out of the theaters. When the cops would shut down one action, text messages directed the activists to the next target. Police undoubtedly received the text messages along with the activists, but the spontaneity forced them to engage in a cat-and-mouse game with the activists.

The text messages alerted activists to routes that remained open to travel to protests outside Madison Square Garden, as the police blocked off large sections of the city. They alerted independent journalists to where cameras were needed to document protests, legal observers to real-time rights violations, and activist medic teams to where people were in need of medical attention.

But with the real-time updates for activists comes a conundrum: If anyone can utilize the service, wouldn't that mean that law enforcement could use it against the demonstrators or to shut down direct actions preemptively?

"The big question in my mind is whether our breaking-news reporting is more useful for us or for the police," says Indymedia activist Josh Breitbart. "The group that probably made most immediate use of the information was the NYPD."

One journalist posted the following report: "The Entire Scooter Goon Squad is wrapped around Fifth and 48th reading INDYMEDIA from an Internet phone booth. Everyone should come by and bring your video cameras."

Jeremy Scahill is a producer/reporter for the national radio and TV show *Democracy Now!* He can be reached at jeremy@democracynow.org.



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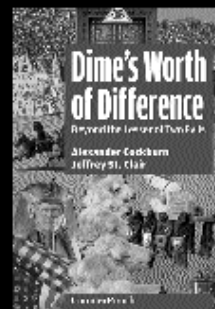
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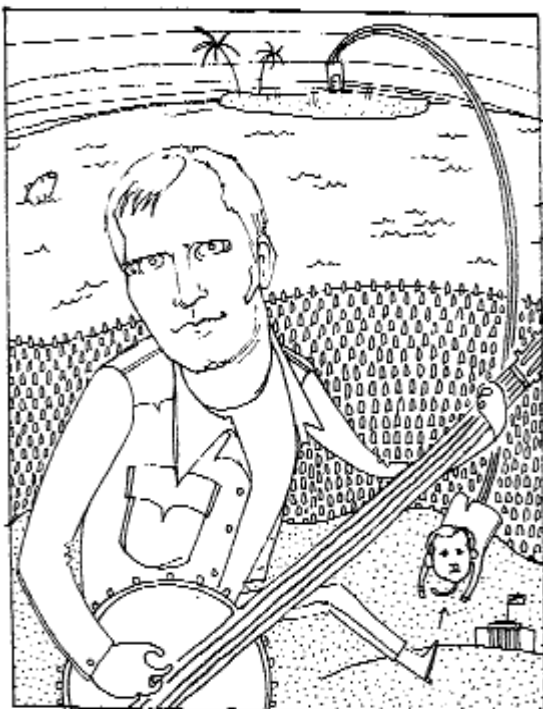
The Revolution Starts Now

STEVE EARLE
ARTEMIS RECORDS

With his combination of Nashville roots and leftist politics, Steve Earle would have been the perfect person to play the "Defend Johnny Cash" protest during the Republican convention last month. (He did perform at the Sept. 1 labor rally.) How many other country singers have ever mentioned Emma Goldman in a song?

Earle, 49, grew up in Texas, the son of one of the air-traffic controllers fired by Ronald Reagan in 1981. He established himself as a country-rocker in the mid-'80s, working the musical territory between bluegrass and Stony hard rock, scoring a hit in 1988 with the redneck pot-growing tale "Copperhead Road" and agitating against the death penalty. He fell deep into heroin and eventually served four months in jail.

He revived in the mid-'90s more musically prolific and politically committed. Since then, he's released albums almost annually, including songs like "I Feel Alright," a rowdy I'm-back garage-rocker; "Cocaine Cannot Kill My Pain," a depths-of-depression drone; and "Christmas in Washington," a political lament over an acoustic guitar track as sparse as a Pennsylvania landscape in winter. Last year's *Jerusalem* attracted far-right sniping for "John Walker's Blues," in which Earle sang from the point of view of "American Taliban"



LIZ TILLOTSON

John Walker Lindh.

Earle's latest album, *The Revolution Starts... Now*, is his most intentionally political album yet. "We desperately wanted to weigh in, both as artists and as citizens of a democracy," he says in the liner notes. "In

times like these voting alone simply isn't enough." It's also one of his most solid records; his voice is croakier than ever, and the band—guitarist Eric Ambel, bassist Kelly Looney, and drummer Will Rigby—kicks at the perfect equilibrium

between loose and tight. Four tracks relate to the Iraq war, from semi-acoustic story songs about "poor boys off to fight in a rich man's war" to the apocalyptic, metallic military-beatnik poem "Warrior." "F the CC," the loudest rocker, rails against corporate radio. It's easy to imagine a hall full of people shouting the chorus, "So fuck the FCC/Fuck the FBI/Fuck the CIA/Livin' in the motherfuckin' USA." It's also easy to imagine Earle getting 86ed from Clear Channel venues for playing it.

There are a couple misses. "Condi, Condi" is a funny calypso-flavored tune, but The Boondocks comic strip did the "give Condoleezza Rice a love life" theme better. The two love songs, one a breakup duet with Emmylou Harris, feel out of place, or at least they don't reach my heart the way "I Remember You" on *Jerusalem* did.

The title track, a surging, anthemic two-chord groove with ring-of-fire guitars, is the absolute high point. It perfectly captures the moment when you realize change is possible if you commit to it.

*The revolution starts now
When you rise above your fear
And tear the walls around
you down
The revolution starts here*

This could be as good a song as John Lennon's "Imagine," and it rocks a lot harder. I want to play it for all the coworkers I've had who are scared to even think the word "union." I wonder what it will sound like in ten years if we don't have a revolution.

—STEVE WISHNIA

Beneath the Hoods at Guantanamo

GUANTANAMO:
HONOR BOUND TO DEFEND FREEDOM
PLAYING AT THE CULTURE PROJECT,
45 BLEECKER STREET, 212-307-4100.

As an overly ambitious high school student, I tried to read Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. It took months to make it through the wrinkled yellow paperback, which spent most of its days squished between textbooks and mixtapes in my backpack. The book made me claustrophobic; it didn't seem to go anywhere.

Later I realized my discomfort was triggered by the very brilliance of Kafka's tale. The protagonist, kept under house arrest with no knowledge of the charges against him, waits in dark hallways for unsatisfactory explanations from evasive bureaucrats. The story is unsettling; it gets under the skin.

We generally don't like art and media to make us uncomfortable in the United States. We spurn darker and more thought-provoking films for mass-produced romantic comedies. We consume a steady diet of choreographed "reality TV" shows, while networks shy away from real images of war, which might provoke too much questioning.

But the overwhelming success of political documentaries this year demonstrates the hunger on the part of many people to open themselves to truths obscured by pop media, realities that may cause discomfort.

Is life simple? If your answer is yes or no, you've thought about it too much. Buddhism teaches that to answer a question is to already assume its reality, thereby trapping oneself in an illusion. If that's true, then Fox's "The Simple Life 2: Road Trip" is pure Dalai Lama as Nicole Ritchie and Paris Hilton, two blissed-out blondes, embark on a mission to educate the American Bible Belt on the futility of work and obedience.

Impossibly thin, they wobble on high heels through swamp and farmland, causing chaos with a single flirtatious wink. I was prepared to hate them, but after a few episodes, I began worshipping them. In New York one encounters many gurus with serene smiles and spine-cracking yoga positions who prom-

ise nirvana, but none I've met have the focus of Nicole and Paris. Our blonde Buddhas find the loopholes in any work schedule to order pizza, go on joy rides, bake in tanning salons, shop, and giggle at the gawking bystanders left behind. Where do they go? Into the camera, where mortals are magnified into minor deities. You can see their divinity in the way girls are ready to up and follow them, leaving home or disobeying their families for a chance to wear the halo of fame that glows around Nicole and Paris.

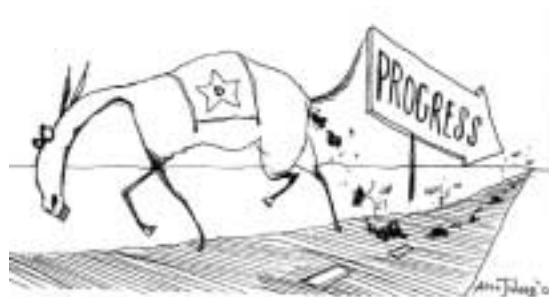
I was about to leave my own family to follow them when I read a line by Karl Marx: "Religion is the opiate of the masses." That spoiled it. "The Simple Life" purports to portray two rich girls who simplify their lives and work the grimy toilet-cleaning jobs that most of us have. Of course, they never actually do this work. The joke instead is on the working class, who host Nicole and Paris show after show, unable to control them or even make a contract with them. If they are supposed to peel shrimp, they order it fully baked from a store. If they are supposed to clean a tub at a hotel, they pretend to be guests, calling in

a maid to do the work for them. It is funny. Except when the Latina maid comes in, she is old and shy and tired. She moves with a slow weariness that is frightening because it cannot be hidden. She tries to quietly do their job but the weight of her exhaustion is so obvious that the giggling of Nicole and Paris sounds like sadistic insane glee. Of course scholars have traced the connection between the mad and the holy, neither of which live in the human world, neither of whom answer to us. We love them, hate them, worship them and imprison them because they don't. The ruling elite sent Nicole and Paris to journey through the rural working class, to film the rich and the poor rubbing elbows, not to re-arrange the hierarchy but to re-affirm it. The show's humor is supposed to lie in the dichotomy between their carefree antics and the strained play-along angst of people who must live with the consequences. The show asks, is life simple? I guess it is if, like Nicole and Paris, you aren't forced to answer the question.

—NICHOLAS POWERS

The Simple Life Aint So Simple





Victoria Britain and Gillian Slovo's "Guantanamo: Honor Bound to Defend Freedom" uses theater to take this trend to a new level.

"Guantanamo," first performed at London's Tricycle Theatre and currently playing at the Culture Project, is based on interviews with released detainees and the families of those still being held at the United States' notorious prison camp in Cuba. It tells the stories of four British detainees, two of whom still languish in 8-by-8 cells with no charges levied against them. It is Kafka's *The Trial* rewritten for the Bush era, and this time it is no fiction.

The stories of the four men, British citizens or legal residents swept up in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Gambia, and labeled "enemy combatants," give a face to the approximately 600 other detainees from over 40 countries who are currently held in Guantanamo. There, the U.S. claims the Geneva Conventions do not apply. Most detainees have been denied access to legal counsel for two and a half years; interrogations, according to released detainees, include stripping prisoners naked and beating them. "Recreation" periods, as Seymour Hersh recently reported in *The Guardian*, have been known to include being hooded, put in straitjackets and left in intense sunlight.

Before the drama begins in earnest, the audience walks directly into the prisoners' predicament. Actors playing the detainees are already on stage, some dressed in blinding orange jumpsuits. They are in mesh cages or on narrow cots, doing pushups, reading the Quran, or blankly staring ahead.

We are introduced to several detainees. Bisher al-Rawi, a British resident whose father fled Iraq years ago after being detained by Saddam Hussein's regime, is arrested in the Gambia, where he intended to set up a peanut-oil processing plant. Jamal al-Harith, a Black convert to Islam and native of Manchester, is en route to Pakistan to learn more about his chosen religion. Jamal is kidnapped in Iran by the Taliban and accused of being a British spy, then released and almost instantly recaptured by the U.S. military. Moazzam Begg flees the bombing of Afghanistan, where he has been installing water pumps as a humanitarian project for Pakistan, only to be kidnapped by U.S. and Pakistani forces and taken away in the trunk of a car. Ruhel Ahmed is also picked up in Pakistan on unknown charges.

These characters, as well as actors playing their family members and lawyers working on their behalf, speak directly to the audience throughout the duration of

the play. Jamal tells of being placed in a freezing isolation cell of bare metal. Ruhel gradually loses his eyesight. Moazzam gradually loses his sanity. At one point we watch an American soldier handcuff Moazzam mid-prayer, chain his wrists to his ankles, and lead him, hunched over, to an off-stage interrogation room. An actor playing Donald Rumsfeld makes a brief cameo, instructing the audience that "These are among the most dangerous, best-trained killers on the face of the earth."

At intermission, the detainees do not leave the stage. And when the play ends, there is no curtain call. The actors remain in their cages, on their cots. The audience waits in some discomfort, slowly understands, and files out. We realize: they are not going anywhere. We are free to leave. They are not. The play is reality; it is happening right now; and it could happen, conceivably, to any of us.

The power of the Culture Project "Guantanamo" production lies in its unsettling straightforwardness. Lacking in dramatic tension, often going for long stretches with minimal movement on the stage as characters relate overlapping narratives, the play never feels slow. While some actors in the relatively young production still seem to be feeling out their characters, others, most notably Andrew Stewart-Jones as al-Harith and Ramsey Faragallah as al-Rawi's brother Wahab, give strong, energetic performances that maintain the viewer's undivided attention.

In March, two months before the play first opened in Britain, Jamal al-Harith and Ruhel Ahmed were released without charges and flown back to Britain. Moazzam Begg and Bisher al-Rawi remain incarcerated and may face U.S. military tribunals, which began in August and have been criticized by human rights groups as farces.

Towards the end of the play, the character of British civil rights lawyer Gareth Peirce tells us, "I think perhaps we're very callous - we see, we hear about atrocities - but we don't have the capacity to register it, to react as human beings."

"Guantanamo" takes one step toward bringing these atrocities to public attention in such a way that we cannot help but react as human beings. It may need to move on beyond 45 Bleeker to avoid merely preaching to the choir. But the play's quiet narrative, and its ability to get under the skin, have the potential to shake diverse audiences out of their callousness.

Guantanamo is playing at the Culture Project, 45 Bleeker Street, 212-307-4100.

—NEELA GHOSH

Anybody But Bush? *Careful what you wish for, you just might get it*

DIME'S WORTH OF DIFFERENCE: BEYOND THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS

EDS. ALEXANDER COCKBURN
& JEFFREY ST. CLAIR
AK PRESS/COUNTERPUNCH

If you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. That's what Malcolm X said 40 years ago when confronted with elections that didn't offer substantial solutions to the problems his people were facing. After decades of lesser-evilmism as the official progressive approach to elections, talking principles is taboo. To the unleashed hordes of pissed-off liberals, it's downright dangerous, and, if you have the nerve to run for president on what you actually believe, "egomaniacal."

CounterPunch.org is one of the

few websites around that's sure to buck the party line, no matter what party you're sweet on. Just when the established left-wing press lockstepped into Anybody But Bush orthodoxy, *CounterPunch's* editors, Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair, went on a tear, exposing the actual record of the Democratic Party's evil lessers. Collecting two dozen of the best essays from their website, *Dime's Worth of Difference* is essential reading for anyone who wants to know what they're voting for, not just against. The results are damning.

Generally sympathetic to Ralph Nader, *Dime's Worth of Difference* nails the coffin on liberal illusions about what the Democrats really offer by digging into their record on the issues that matter the most.

Looking back over the reign of the last lesser evil, contributor JoAnn Wypijewski tallies the results of the Clinton era through the eyes of a former Rainbow Coalition volunteer. "[T]he black stripe of the Rainbow got the Crime Bill, women got 'welfare reform,' labor got NAFTA, gays and lesbians got the Defense of

Marriage Act. Even with a Democratic Congress in the early years, the peace crowd got no cuts in the military; unions got no help on the right to organize; advocates of DC statehood got nothing... the single-payer crowd got worse than nothing. Between Clinton's inaugural and the day he left office, 700,000 more persons were incarcerated, mostly minorities; today one in eight black men is barred from voting because of prison, probation or parole."

In short, anybody who is poor or hopes America might be something better than a latter-day Rome had better get used to the fact that neither party plans to dish out much besides more of the same. How else to explain that despite 80 percent opposition to the Iraqi war from Democratic primary voters, yet another DLC hawk got the nod? For anyone who doubts the depth of the Democrats' complicity in the "Bush agenda," you have to pick this one up. Sticking your head in the sand won't stop the tide from crashing up the beach.

—JED BRANDT

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